

# SUMMER IS AROUND THE CORNER, SO MAKE THIS A SAFE AND HEALTHY SEASON

**Mark your calendars:**

**May 15 International Water Safety Day**

**May 22-28 National Safe Boating Week**

May is **National Water Safety Month**, a time when West Central Florida county health departments encourage communities to participate in water and sun safety and take preventive measures to prevent drownings, skin damage, and heat exhaustion. West Central Florida county health departments serving Citrus, Hardee, Hernando, Highlands, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, and Sarasota counties recognize the importance of National Water Safety Month.

With pools, lakes, and other surrounding bodies of water in Florida, water safety is key in preventing drownings. Children ages 1-4 are more likely to drown in a home swimming pool, compared to children ages 5-19 who are more likely to drown in natural bodies of water. Whether you are a parent or a community group member, everyone plays a role in drowning prevention. The goal is to keep water activities fun and safe for all as we move into the summer months. Here are a few water safety tips provided by WaterSmartFL: [www.watersmartfl.com](http://www.watersmartfl.com)

## **Tips on Water Safety:**

- Supervision, learn to make water safety a priority, ensure that your family members are knowledgeable around the water, assign a “water watcher,” by having a responsible adult around to actively watch when a child or adult is in or around the water.
- Barriers, a child should never enter the pool area unaccompanied. Barriers including gates, fences, walls, doors, and windows are recommended to aid in the assistance and protection of those who are at risk.
- Emergency Preparedness, in an emergency, it is critical to have a phone nearby to call 911 if needed. Know your location and know what type of emergency you are calling about. CPR and First Aid are also important to know.

## **Beach and Lake Swimming:**

Swimming in open water is much different than swimming in a pool but most people are not aware of how different they are. Even the strongest swimmer can get into trouble swimming in open water. Here are some tips and other layers of protection when swimming at the beach or lake:

**Swim It:** Always swim with a buddy and when safety flags and signs give it the all-clear to do so!

**Shore It:** If you have a cut on your skin or if your immune system is weakened, or you don't have a buddy to swim with, stay on dry land.

**Dodge It:** If you encounter animals that live near or in the water, stay away, also stay clear from red tides and algal blooms like blue-green algae. This can cause skin irritation, burning eyes, and throat, and breathing irritations. [Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission](#) posts the status of red tide locations and the [Florida Department of Environmental Protection](#) monitors blue-green algae.)

For more visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W7Rp757hv88>

For more information on National Water Safety Month, visit:

<https://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/prevention/drowning-prevention/index.html>, and <https://nwsn.phta.org/>

For more information or questions, please contact your county health department.

<b>DOH-Citrus</b>	(352) 527-0068	<b>DOH-Manatee</b>	(941) 748-0747
<b>DOH-Hardee</b>	(863) 773-4161	<b>DOH-Pasco</b>	(727) 619-0300
<b>DOH-Hernando</b>	(352) 540-6800	<b>DOH-Pinellas</b>	(727) 824-6900
<b>DOH-Highlands</b>	(863) 386-6040	<b>DOH-Polk</b>	(863) 519-7900
<b>DOH-Hillsborough</b>	(813) 307-8000	<b>DOH-Sarasota</b>	(941) 861-2900

### About the Florida Department of Health

The department works to protect, promote, and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county, and community efforts.

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